

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This amendment follows the Advisory Action issued May 5, 2004. Applicant appreciates the reconsideration afforded by the Examiner and the Examiner's indication in the Advisory Action that the rejections of Claims 2, 3, 4, and 9 are overcome.

Applicant has amended Claim 1 to include the limitations of allowable Claim 2. In addition, Applicant has added new independent Claims 12 and 20. New Claim 12 includes the limitations of previously allowable Claim 4, and Claim 20 includes the limitations of previously allowable Claim 9, each including all of the limitations of the base claim(s). Newly added Claims 13-19 and 21-25 are dependent on Claims 12 and 20, respectively, and each of the new dependent claims corresponds to one of the previous dependent Claims 4-10.

Each of the claims as presented above includes, or is based upon, a claim that was previously indicated to be allowable. Thus, Applicant submits that Claims 1 and 3-25 are in condition for allowance and solicits the Examiner's concurrence.

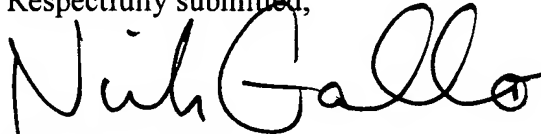
Applicant submits that the comments provided in the response filed April 7, 2004 accurately describe the substance of the April 6, 2004 telephonic interview per Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP) § 713.04. Therefore, no further interview summary is included. However, if the Examiner believes the April 7, 2004 comments to be deficient in any way, Applicant politely requests his notification.

* * * *

CONCLUSIONS

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,

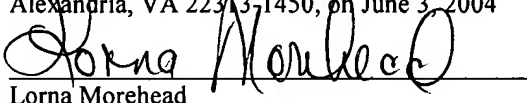


Nicholas F. Gallo
Registration No. 50,135

Customer No. 00826
ALSTON & BIRD LLP
Bank of America Plaza
101 South Tryon Street, Suite 4000
Charlotte, NC 28280-4000
Tel Charlotte Office (704) 444-1000
Fax Charlotte Office (704) 444-1111

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on June 3, 2004


Lorna Morehead